



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Williams Coasts Past Sharapova In Friday's Quarterfinal Showdown

Williams faces Sabine Lisicki on Saturday in the semifinals while Marion Bartoli meets Dominika Cibulkova.

STANFORD, Calif. (www.BankOfTheWestClassic.com) – Serena Williams made quick work of Maria Sharapova in the tournament's most highly-anticipated matchup of the week, knocking off the tournament's No. 2 seed 6-1, 6-3 on Friday night in the quarterfinals of the 2011 Bank of the West Classic.

Playing in front of a sellout crowd of 3,866- the highest attended session since the 2004 final between Venus Williams and Lindsay Davenport- Williams needed only one hour and nine minutes to put away Sharapova, who earned a runner-up finish in last year's event.

Taking the next step in her comeback and competing in only her third tournament since last year's Wimbledon, Williams improved to 7-2 all-time against Sharapova. Pounding home six aces and relying on her trademark serve, Williams raced out to commanding leads in both sets and was rarely threatened.

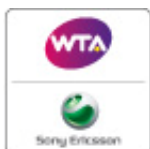
Williams will now face upstart Sabine Lisicki in Saturday's evening session. Lisicki registered her second straight upset, knocking off No. 5 seed Agnieszka Radwanska 7-6 (4), 2-6, 6-2 in Friday's quarterfinals. After Lisicki pulled out a tough first set, Radwanska charged back to even the match with a 6-2 triumph in the second frame. But Lisicki followed by winning five of the first six games in the third set to secure the victory.

Saturday's other singles semifinal will feature a pair of seeded players who enjoyed easy wins on Friday. Third-seeded Marion Bartoli took the first set 6-1 against Morita, and then eventually was awarded the victory when Morita retired at the start of the second frame due to a right ankle injury. Eighth-seeded wildcard Dominika Cibulkova ended the feel-good tourney run of qualifier Marina Erakovic, coasting to a 6-1, 6-1 win. Erakovic had to win five matches just to reach Friday's contest, but looked a step behind against Cibulkova, one of two players in the top-20 yet to win a singles title. Bartoli and Cibulkova will match up on Saturday at 1 p.m.

In doubles play, the top-seeded duo of Liezel Huber and Lisa Raymond moved on to the semifinals with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Sharon Fichman and Marie-Eve Pelletier.

Tickets for the 2011 Bank of the West Classic can be purchased by calling the box office at 866-WTA-TIXS (866-982-8497) or by logging on to www.BankoftheWestClassic.com.

The Bank of the West Classic, a WTA Premier event, is now in its 41st year and features a 28-player singles draw as well as a 16-team doubles draw. The event is owned and operated by IMG and serves as the opening women's event of the Olympus US Open Series.



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